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September 1976

NILES AREA PLAN

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

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City planning } Niles
Land Utiliz. } Fremont

September 16, 1976

FREMONT CITY COUNCIL
FREMONT PLANNING COMMISSION

Dear Members:

This report outlines the findings and conclusions of the Niles Area Plan Study Committee. The sixteen (16) member committee was appointed by the City Council on March 23, 1976, to re-evaluate the existing Niles Area Plan. The Committee represents the interests and viewpoints of residents, business people, and Council appointed Commissions. The Committee's primary responsibilities were (1) to work with City staff in proposing and evaluating a new Area Plan for Niles, (2) to hold public hearings to assure that Niles residents had opportunity to make input to the Committee process, and (3) to report the Committee's recommendations to the Planning Commission and City Council.

This report was unanimously approved by the Niles Area Plan Study Committee at its final meeting held on August 25, 1976. The Committee has held fourteen (14) meetings since March 29, 1976. Two well-attended public hearings were held on June 21 and August 16, 1976. Approximately 200 persons attended the first hearing held at Niles Elementary School. Approximately 150 persons attended the second held at Corpus Christi Church.

The Niles Area Plan Study Committee's major land use recommendations are shown on Exhibit "A." The major differences between the present plan and the proposed plan are as follows:

- (a) Reduction of Commercial area in Niles "Proper" to $19\pm$ acres to reflect the existing $13\pm$ acres plus $6\pm$ acres of land on the north side of Niles Boulevard.
- (b) Deletion of the mall area in the Niles Boulevard commercial center.
- (c) Designation of the Second and Third Street residential areas as 6.5-10 dwelling units per gross acre instead of 15-18 and 23-27 unit higher density designation in this portion of Niles "Proper."
- (d) Change of the combined Residential-Commercial areas to Commercial for the westerly quadrant of Niles Canyon Road and Mission Boulevard, to Residential 6.5-10 dwelling units per gross acre for the southerly quadrant of the same intersection, and to Residential 4.5-6.5 dwelling units per gross acre for the frontage road along Mission Boulevard.
- (e) Designation of $92+$ acres at the foot of the hills along Mission Boulevard as Residential 4.5-6.5 dwelling units per gross acre.

(f) Designation of Industry for the area on both sides of King Avenue, Research Administration on both sides of Hillside Avenue, and Residential 6.5-10 dwelling units per gross acre for the remainder of this area up to Nursery Avenue.

The Committee's major circulation recommendations are shown on Exhibit "A." The major different between the present plan and the Committee proposal are as follows:

- (a) Deletion of Alameda Creek Parkway.
- (b) Indication of Route 84 as "under study."
- (c) Indication of Niles Boulevard as a thoroughfare from the Union City bounds to Rancho Arroyo, as a collector from Rancho Arroyo to Sullivan Underpass and as a thoroughfare from Sullivan Underpass to the Amchem Plant.
- (d) Change of thoroughfares in the Hills to collectors, and deletion of minor streets in the Hills.
- (e) Creation of historical trail on Second Street.

To guide the implementation of the Area Plan, the Commission recommends adoption of eight (8) objectives and twenty-two (22) principles.

The objectives are:

1. To maintain and enhance the physical characteristics which provide the historical continuity and individuality that give Niles a small town character and distinguish it from other areas of the City.
2. To maintain a housing balance in the overall Niles community between newer and older, larger and smaller, and more and less expensive units.
3. To focus community commercial activity on both sides of Niles Boulevard and to provide improvements which will enhance the identification of this area as the center of the district.
4. To preserve the architectural features characteristic of "old Niles," and to ensure that new construction contributes to this character.
5. To provide a rich and varied park and recreation system through regional, community, neighborhood, and historic parks and trails which will assure the Niles community of long-term desirability as a living and working environment.
6. To permit large lot residential and other low intensity development in the hill areas to the degree that such development is consistent with the natural capacities of the land.
7. To provide a City trail system which links the Niles hills, the commercial center, historic sites, and park areas via the regional trail system to Niles Canyon and Coyote Hills.
8. To plan a circulation system which is adequate to handle anticipated traffic volumes but which does not encourage unnecessary through traffic.

The Committee also recommends:

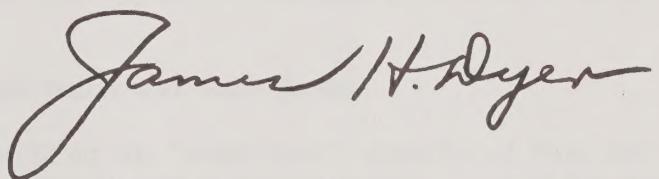
1. Adoption of an R-1-4 or similar zoning district to apply to Niles "Proper."
2. Rezoning of the residential areas in Niles "Proper" presently zoned R-1-8(H) and C-C(H) to R-1-4(H) or similar zoning districts.
3. Rezoning to C-C(H) of the present Southern Pacific Railroad yard upon cessation of that activity.
4. Utilization of Community Development Block Grant funds for housing rehabilitation of Niles along with parking and related improvements in the commercial area.

For each area, land use (see Exhibit 3), zoning (see Exhibit 4), and circulation, factors are analyzed and the Committee's recommendations stated.

JAMES DYER
Chairman
Niles Area Plan Study Committee

HB:bc

Atch.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James H. Dyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with "James" on top, "H." in the middle, and "Dyer" on the bottom line.

INTRODUCTION

The Existing Niles Area Plan

The present Area Plan (see Exhibit 1) for Niles was adopted by the City Council on July 15, 1969, as part of the City's "701" planning process. The present plan indicates redevelopment of many of the older portions of the community. The creation of a pedestrian mall on Niles Boulevard between Sullivan Underpass and "G" Street, replacement of many present day homes with high density apartments, and an expanded community commercial center are the main features of the existing plan. To many residents of Niles, as well as other citizens, such a plan is no longer desirable.

In 1974, the Niles hill area portion of this plan was amended designating areas of steep slope and unstable soils as Open Space in accordance with the adopted Open Space Element of the General Plan. This hill area portion of the present plan appears to have general community acceptance and support.

Major Issues and Issue Areas

Early in their study, the Committee identified the "small town" character of Niles and the area of redevelopment proposed by the higher density and commercial designations of the present plan as the major issues. This conclusion was unanimously endorsed by the residents attending the first public meeting.

The widening of Niles Boulevard, the Rancho Arroyo Parkway extension to Mission Boulevard, the improvement and/or reconstruction of the existing underpasses, the Alameda Creek Parkway, the realignment of "G" Street to Sullivan Underpass, and the proposed mall area were also considered major issues.

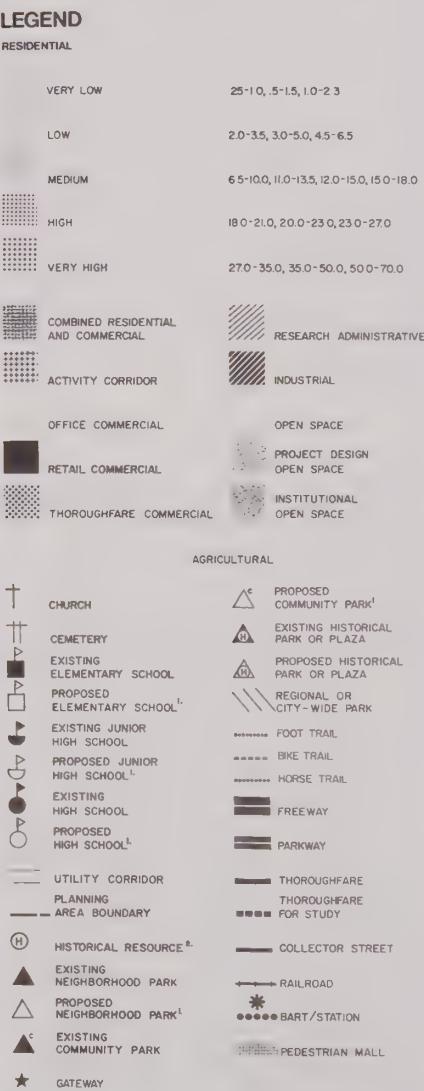
To structure the Committee's task, Niles was divided in six (6) areas (see Exhibit 2), each of which was studied in detail to determine areas of concern. These six issue areas serve as the basis for organizing the remainder of this report.



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FREMONT GENERAL
PLAN
NILES
AREA PLAN



NOTES
¹ SIZE AND LOCATION ARE APPROXIMATE
² FOR IDENTIFICATION REFER TO THE PRIMARY HISTORICAL RESOURCE MAPS

THIS MAP AND THE ACCOMPANYING TEXTUAL MATERIALS ILLUSTRATES CONCEPTS AND IDEAS AND SHOULD BE USED AS A GUIDE IN PLANNING PURPOSES. SPECIFIC PLANS AND ZONING CODES MUST BE USED TO IMPLEMENTATION.



MAJOR LAND USE ISSUE AREAS

- 1 NILES PROPER, BOUNDED BY SCHOOL STREET SOUTHERN PACIFIC RAILROAD, ALAMEDA COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL CHANNEL.
- 2 JUNCTION OF NILES BOULEVARD AND MISSION BOULEVARD.
- 3 NEIGHBORHOODS WEST OF SCHOOL STREET
- 4 NORTH OF NURSERY AVENUE AREAS BOUNDED BY NILES BOULEVARD, CITY BOUNDARY MISSION BOULEVARD NURSERY AVENUE
- 5 NILES HILL AREA WEST, BOUNDED BY MISSION BOULEVARD, CITY BOUNDARY NILES CANYON ROAD
- 6 NILES HILL AREA EAST, BOUNDED BY MISSION BOULEVARD, NILES CANYON ROAD, CITY BOUNDARY, MORRISON CANYON ROAD



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GENERALIZED LAND USES

LEGEND

	SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
	OTHER RESIDENTIAL
	INDUSTRIAL
	UTILITIES
	RETAIL TRADE
	WHOLESALE TRADE
	SERVICES
	INSTITUTIONAL
	RECREATIONAL
	AGRICULTURAL
	VACANT



N

0' 1000'



ZONING LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS	
R-1-6	SINGLE FAMILY, 6000 SQ. FT. LOTS
R-1-8	SINGLE FAMILY, 8000 SQ. FT. LOTS
R-1-10	SINGLE FAMILY, 10,000 SQ. FT. LOTS
R-2	ONE AND TWO FAMILY
R-G-15	GARDEN APARTMENTS 15,000 SQ. FT. LOTS
R-G-25	GARDEN APARTMENT 25,000 SQ. FT. LOTS
P	PLANNED DISTRICTS
COMMERCIAL DISTRICTS	
C-O	OFFICE
C-T	THOROUGHFARE
C-C	COMMUNITY
C-N	NEIGHBORHOOD
C-V-R	VISITOR RECREATION
INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS	
I-R-20	RESEARCH AND ADMINISTRATIVE
G-I-20	GENERAL 20,000 SQ. FT. LOTS
C-G	GENERAL
AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS	
A	AGRICULTURAL
OVERLAY DISTRICTS	
H	HISTORICAL OVERLAY
(H-I)	HILLSIDE COMBINING
(Q)	QUARRY



N



ANALYSIS

AREA 1 – NILES “PROPER” (Area generally bounded by School Street, Southern Pacific Railroad, and the Alameda County Flood Control channel – see Exhibit 2.)

Major Issues

- (a) Land Use:
 - Areas designated for higher density.
 - Present lot sizes and zoning.
 - Areas designated for commercial and mall.
 - Use of Southern Pacific property.
- (b) Circulation:
 - Underpasses.
 - Alleys.
 - Access to park.
- (c) Image:
 - Preservation of small town character.

Considerations

- (a) General Plan: The present Area Plan designates 30 acres as Retail Commercial and 55 acres as higher density (15-18 and 23-27 dwelling units per gross acre) residential representing 1,205 dwelling units at the middle of the density ranges.

If the present plan were to be executed, the net result would be:

- (1) Addition of 17 acres of Commercial use;
- (2) Displacement of 481 single family dwelling units on Second and Third Streets;
- (3) Addition of 1,205 higher density apartments for a net gain of 724 dwelling units.

These impacts are sufficiently adverse in relation to benefits, that the Committee does not support the present Area Plan. The present plan also would result in a total change in the type of community environment contained in Niles. A more appropriate objective is the maintenance of Niles' present small town character.

- (b) Zoning: If areas were to be developed in accordance with their present zoning, there would be a total of 23 acres of Commercial use and 308 Residential dwelling units in this Niles “Proper” area for a net result of:

- (1) Addition of 10 acres of Commercial land; and
- (2) Displacement of 173 single family dwelling units on Second Street.

This increase in Commercial use on Second Street would have adverse effects on circulation and the character of the area. Deletion of existing housing stock was also considered not desirable.

- (c) Existing Development: At present, there are 13 acres of developed commercial land and 481 single family dwelling units on a variety of lot sizes in Niles “Proper.” The objective of maintaining the area's small town image was best served, it was concluded, by maintaining residential areas in Niles “Proper” in their present locations but with a potential addition of 4-6 acres of Retail Commercial uses on the Southern Pacific Railroad property on the north side of Niles Boulevard (see under (f) below).

(d) **Tax Assessment and Ownership:** To determine whether lands at present planned or zoned commercially but used residentially were assessed at values different from similarly situated residentially designated and zoned properties, assessor records for properties on Second Street (presently zoned C-C and C-O) and Third Street (presently zoned R-1-8) were examined. No differences in land values were found. Lands either zoned or designated commercially on the General Plan but used residentially were assessed the same as similar properties zoned or designated residentially. Since owners of land zoned commercially are paying no higher taxes than owners of residential land, the financial impacts of "downzoning" lands on Second Street are not major. It was also discovered that the same proportion of houses are renter and owner occupied on Second and Third Streets. This indicates no pattern of anticipated conversion to commercial uses of residences now zoned commercially on Second Street.

(e) **Lot Size Distribution:** The residential portion of Niles "Proper" gives the impression of "small houses on small lots." This is contradicted by the existing R-1-8 zoning. Lot sizes in this portion of Niles "Proper" are distributed as follows:

Lot Size in Square Feet	Under 4,000		4,000–5,999		6,000–7,999		8,000 and Over	
Occupied by:	1 unit	more than 1 unit on same lot	1 unit	more than 1 unit on same lot	1 unit	more than 1 unit on same lot	1 unit	more than 1 unit on same lot
Number of Lots	34	4	49	7	107	25	53	22
Total	301	Total 38		Total 56		Total 132		Total 75

Of the 301 lots in the residential section of Niles "Proper," only 75 or 25% are 8,000 square feet or larger as required by the present R-1-8 zoning and 22 of these have more than 1 unit on the property.

The R-1-8 zoning district designation for this area gives the majority of the lots a nonconforming status and is therefore inappropriate. A zoning more accurately reflecting the smaller lots found in Niles "Proper" as well as allowing for the diversity also found in this area would be a single family district with 4,000 foot minimum lot requirements and appropriate setbacks. Parcels under 4,000 feet would have to be dealt with individually based on their own special situation.

(f) **Southern Pacific Property (North Side of Niles Boulevard):** At the present time, this property is zoned C-G(H) and used as a railroad yard. Elimination and/or realignment of some of the tracks has been indicated to be a possibility in which event approximately 6 acres with frontage on Niles Boulevard would be available for development. Community Commercial, rather than General Commercial uses would be most appropriate at this location. In view of the shortage of parking in Niles, a portion of the property may be developed as a parking lot utilizing funds made available through the Community Development Block Grant Program. The remaining acreage would then be available for Community Commercial uses, thus providing desirable development on both sides of Niles Boulevard. These improvements would enhance the identification of this section of Niles Boulevard as the center of the district.

(g) **Parks:** Public acquisition of park lands in Niles "Proper" is essentially complete. Detailed park planning is most appropriately conducted through the Park Master Plan preparation process as is now being undertaken for the Niles Community Park and Quarry Regional Recreation Area lands.

(h) Circulation:

(1) **Underpasses:** The Sullivan Underpass and the underpass opposite the Amchem Plant can be evaluated both positively and negatively. On the one hand, the Amchem underpass with its right angle turn represents in the minds of some persons Niles' major traffic problem today. With traffic increases in the future, this condition can be expected to worsen. These same underpasses, on the other hand, also give Niles its seclusion. The underpasses limit through traffic. Improvements in the form of a widening of existing underpass facilities or a new structure are not considered an immediate need in any case. In the long term, however, improvements may be necessary and desirable. A feasibility study and cost analysis of a realigned Niles Boulevard crossing at the Amchem Plant is recommended, so that in the event that future traffic increases, or in the event that commercial uses on Niles Boulevard require improved access, the improvement of the existing crossings or a new facility can be undertaken. This study and evaluation should be included in the redevelopment study underway for the Vallejo Street area.

(2) **Niles Boulevard and Mall:** Reductions in commercial and higher density acreages have reduced the number of trips generated or attracted to the Niles "Proper" area. This factor as well as the residential land uses recommended for Second and Third Streets make the circulation system as proposed by the existing Area Plan obsolete. Instead of rerouting traffic via Third Street and the creation of a mall over a portion of Niles Boulevard, Niles Boulevard may need to be improved for four (4) lanes (undivided with parallel on-street parking) within the existing 80 foot right-of-way from Sullivan Underpass to the Amchem Plant. The section from Sullivan Underpass to the Rancho Arroyo Parkway would remain as a two-lane facility with parking. This avoids potential displacement of 20± dwelling units on the north side of Niles Boulevard and discourages traffic from using Niles Boulevard as a through street. Some localized congestion, however, may be the inevitable result.

In order to more carefully evaluate this possibility, it is recommended that after adoption of a new Niles Area Plan that a computer run be made to confirm the adequacy of the proposed circulation system to carry the traffic generated or attracted by the proposed land uses in this area.

(3) **Alleys:** In their present condition, largely as a result of the cloud over title to the alleys, these access ways are neither a visual nor a functional asset to Niles. Improved through joint private and/or public efforts, they could become a safe and attractive means of access to adjacent properties and a factor making Niles unique compared to other sections of Fremont.

(4) **Trails:** The existing Area Plan indicates a bike trail along Niles Boulevard to Sullivan Underpass and a foot trail from the California Nursery Historical Park along Second Street to "G" Street with a connection to the Alameda Creek trail and Quarry Park.

It is recommended that the Niles Boulevard bike trail be extended beyond Sullivan Underpass to connect with the Niles Canyon facility and a connection be provided with the Alameda Creek and Quarry Park via "H" Street. The foot trail should originate on the Niles Boulevard main entrance to the California Nursery Park and run via Hillview Drive along Second Street to become an historic trail along this street. A connection to the Alameda Creek trail and Quarry Park is provided via "H" Street.

A bridge crossing is recommended to tie these Niles trails with the ones along Shinn Street and the Central Area.

AREA 2 -- JUNCTION OF NILES BOULEVARD AND MISSION BOULEVARD

Major Issues

- (a) Land Use:
 - Present GP designation of combined commercial and residential south of Mission Boulevard.
 - Potential redevelopment.
- (b) Circulation:
 - Access from Mission Boulevard.
 - Amchem Underpass.

Considerations

- (a) **Redevelopment Study:** On March 23, 1976, the City Council adopted Resolution No. 3833 approving a program for the implementation of the Community Development Block Grant plan. Part of this program is a feasibility study of redeveloping properties at the intersection of Niles and Mission Boulevard. On August 3, 1976, a contract for the preparation of this study was signed with the firm of Keyser Marston.

Land use recommendations for this area made by the Niles Area Plan Study Committee may need to be modified after this study is completed in December, 1976. However, input from the Committee may also be useful in shaping the execution of the redevelopment study.

It would be the Committee's recommendation that this study evaluate the area's circulation needs and that right-of-way be reserved in this area for possible future realignment and reconstruction of the Amchem Underpass. In the event that such a reservation were found to be necessary, it could be accomplished at the time of land disposition at the conclusion of a redevelopment process.

- (b) **Property Characteristics:** The present General Plan indicates this area south of Mission Boulevard as combined residential and commercial with the present zoning being R-1-6(H) and R-2(H). The existing land use is primarily residential with the exception of the southerly corner of Niles Canyon Road and Mission Boulevard where a small grocery store and some vacant land is located. The westerly quadrant ("old town" area) of this intersection contains approximately eight (8) acres of land and is occupied by nine (9) houses clustered around old Vallejo Street.
- (c) **Land Use Potential:** Since the area east of Niles Boulevard along Vallejo Street is at present occupied by residential uses, it was felt that the designation of combined residential and commercial on the existing General Plan would lead to no change in the present uses in the next 5-15 years. It is also questionable whether it is desirable to mix uses as proposed on the present plan. This area is proposed as Residential 6.5-10, therefore, to encourage preservation of the existing residential character and to ensure that new construction will be compatible with this character.

The area on the westerly side of Niles Boulevard (the "old town" area where Vallejo Street and Mission Boulevard intersected) has a less well established land use character since most of the area is vacant and under-utilized. In line with the conclusions reached in the Commercial Activity Study indicating that additional commercial acreage was needed in the City at major thoroughfare intersections, these lands (8± acres) should be designated as commercial rather than combined residential and commercial on the Niles Area Plan.

The commercial uses, however, should primarily serve the needs of the motoring public and the larger Fremont community rather than the needs of Niles residents for convenience goods. Convenience goods are more appropriately provided by the existing Niles community commercial section and its potential expansion on Southern Pacific Railroad lands.

Appropriate zoning district designations would be either C-T (Thoroughfare Commercial) or C-R (Regional Commercial) with uses such as motels and restaurants.

(d) Circulation:

- (1) **Amchem Underpass:** (See discussion in regard to Niles "Proper" area.)
- (2) **Access to Proposed Commercial Area:** Due to a present grade differential and the location of the railroad overcrossing, access from Mission Boulevard will not be available to the proposed commercial area except perhaps for right turn movements only. Future development, therefore, would have its main access from Niles Boulevard. This, combined with the traffic generated in the remainder of Niles, would necessitate widening Niles Boulevard between Mission Boulevard and the Amchem Underpass to four (4) lanes including protected left turn pockets.
- (3) **Access to Property Adjacent to the Creek:** Because of the safety hazards which would be created by access to Mission Boulevard immediately adjacent to the bridge crossing the creek, access to this one± acre parcel should be provided to Vallejo Street.

AREA 3 – NEIGHBORHOODS WEST OF SCHOOL STREET (including Rancho Arroyo, The Trees, and Hacienda Gardens)

Considerations

(a) **Land Uses:** There are few major land use issues remaining in this area, the Committee's recommendation consists mainly of an updating of land uses to reflect the "as built" condition.

The California Nursery Historical Park, the apartment and townhouse densities of the California Nursery Planned District, are recommended as "update" changes to the plan.

One change which the Committee does recommend is that the area at the Rock Avenue–Niles Boulevard intersection at present zoned C-N, be redesignated for Residential 15-18 uses. This recommendation is based on the following conclusions:

- (1) Commercial uses should be concentrated in the "downtown" area — the Rock Avenue site detracts from this objective.
- (2) Neighborhood commercial uses should serve the surrounding neighborhood — the neighborhoods near Rock Avenue can be best served by commercial uses in the community's "downtown" area.
- (3) Neighborhood patronage is necessary to support convenience commercial uses — neighborhood opposition rather than support has been expressed for commercial uses at Rock Avenue.
- (4) General Plan policies state that neighborhood commercial uses should be compatible with their environment and not result in nuisance characteristics — single family homes front on Rock Avenue, which would be impacted by autos entering and leaving the Rock Avenue site.

(b) **Circulation:** Niles Boulevard is recommended to be indicated as a thoroughfare from the City boundary to Rancho Arroyo Parkway and as a collector from Rancho Arroyo to the Sullivan Underpass.

On the existing Area Plan, the Second Street foot trail runs across a parcel of Hillview Drive property (with well and pump facility). To facilitate control and avoid vandalism, the trail should be rerouted via Niles Boulevard so that park access takes place at the main entrance to the park.

Nursery Avenue is rated as a crucial link between Niles Boulevard and Mission Boulevard. The extension of Rancho Arroyo in the future will fulfill this need in an improved manner.

AREA 4 -- NORTH OF NURSERY AVENUE AREAS (bounded by Niles Boulevard, the City boundary, Mission Boulevard, and Nursery Avenue)

Issues

- (a) Land Use
 - Amount and kind of industrial uses.
 - Amount and kind of residential uses.
- (b) Circulation:
 - Possible deletion of Route 84 Freeway as shown on present plan.
 - Mission Boulevard median breaks.
 - Traffic mix on King and Hillside Streets.
 - Rancho Arroyo extension.

Considerations

- (a) General Plan and Zoning: The existing Area Plan indicates the area westerly of the proposed Route 84 Freeway and Industrial. The area bounded by the Southern Pacific Railroad, proposed Route 84, and Mission Boulevard is at present planned to be Research Administrative. The area bounded by Niles Boulevard, Route 84, the Southern Pacific Railroad, and Nursery Avenue is shown as Residential 2-3.5. Existing zoning is G-I-20; I-R-20, R-1-10, and Agriculture. Reference to zoning and land use maps (Exhibits 3 and 4) is especially helpful in considering this area of Niles.
- (b) Land Uses — Industrial — Residential: Existing industrial uses include the following major ones: Kraftile, Interlocking Rooftile, and DeLucchi Well and Pump, Inc. It is proposed that the Kraftile property be designated as Industrial while adjacent properties with frontages on Niles Boulevard be shown as Residential 2-3.5. The remainder of the southern portion of Area 4 (with the exception of the area of "The Trees" which is proposed as Residential 6.5-10 reflecting the "as built" townhouses) is proposed to remain in its present Residential 2-3.5 designation.

For the northern portion of Area 4, the existing zoning line between the G-I and I-R districts is proposed to serve as the boundary between an Industrial designation and Research Administrative designation. The remainder of this area is proposed as Residential 6.5-10. The Research Administrative area serves as a compatible buffer zone between the heavier uses permitted in the G-I district and the proposed Residential area.

The remainder, approximately 27 acres, is proposed to be Residential 6.5-10 on the basis of the following factors: (1) an ample supply of industrial lands elsewhere in the City having good access to freeways and railroads, (2) a limited supply, and, therefore, strong demand for residential flat lands, (3) a similarity to and equal treatment as residential lands across the railroad ("The Trees" development), and (4) replacement of densities "lost" in Niles "Proper" because of the elimination of the higher density areas. Though this area is subjected to moderately high noise levels from Mission Boulevard and the Southern Pacific tracks, noise can be mitigated through project design as has been done in "The Trees" neighborhood on the opposite side of the tracks.

(c) Circulation:

(1) **Route 84:** In 1968, the City conducted a City-wide traffic study as part of its 701 planning program. This study dealt with the City in its "full built out" condition, and assumed that all thoroughfares and freeways would be built, including Routes 84 and 238. The problem of land use impacts in the event that these routes are not built, and the need to update the results of the 701 study have led the City to undertake a new City-wide Freeway Deletion Traffic Study.

This recently completed traffic study indicates a definite need for Route 238. It further indicates that the elimination of Route 84 from Route 17 to 238 does not have a significant impact on the City's street system. The California Highway Commission has indicated their intent of elimination of this link from their freeway system, but to date have not taken a positive action. If this Route 84 Freeway is deleted, alternative land use plans have been drawn for lands in this right-of-way.

(2) **Mission Boulevard (Route 238)/Median Breaks:** Mission Boulevard is presently being widened and improved by the State of California. Improvements consist of adding additional travel lanes plus channelization and signalization at selected intersections. The location of the median breaks has been coordinated with the City of Fremont to provide access to abutting properties. These are located at King Avenue; Hillside Avenue; Rancho Arroyo extension; Nursery Avenue; Sullivan Underpass, vicinity of Villa del Greco; Mayhews Road, and Niles Canyon Road.

The locations of these breaks are in conformance with the State of California Policy on access to State highways.

(3) **Nature of King and Hillside Avenues:** King Avenue is proposed to serve the Industrial area and Hillside Avenue is proposed to serve Research Administrative uses. This avoids mixing heavy and light industrial traffic and does not detract from the proposed light industrial area. Hillside Avenue could also provide a point of access to the nearby residential area utilizing the existing median opening on Mission Boulevard.

(4) **Rancho Arroyo Extension:** No date can be given as to when this facility will be constructed; however, the Committee recognizes the importance of this project.

It should be noted that access from the proposed Residential 6.5-10 lands to the proposed extension is not likely to be possible or will be severely limited due to the grade separation of the undercrossing.

AREA 5 – NILES HILL AREA WEST (bounded by Mission Boulevard, the City boundary, and Niles Canyon Road)

Issues

(a) **Land Use:**

- Additional Residential at the foot of the hills.
- Junior High School.
- Existing Commercial along Niles Boulevard.
- Hill area parks and elementary school.

(b) **Circulation:**

- Type of hill area streets.
- Route 84 connection with Mission Boulevard.
- Trails.

Considerations

- (a) **1974 Open Space Amendment:** (See Introduction.)
- (b) **Land Use Along Mission Boulevard at Base of the Hills:** The 1974 Open Space amendment in the Niles hills designated land north of Mission Boulevard as Open Space. Closer inspection has revealed that, though the Hayward fault traverses this area, that much of the area adjacent to Mission Boulevard is otherwise flat and unconstrained. These areas are proposed to be designated as Residential 4.5-6.5. Designation of these lands for residential uses in part can be viewed as a substitute for units "lost" in Niles "Proper" by elimination of units in the higher density area. Approximately 650 units are returned to the housing pool in this fashion. It should also be noted that showing Residential uses along Mission Boulevard maintains the predominantly residential character of Mission Boulevard within Fremont. The exception to this is found in the vicinity of Mayhews Road where the existing nonconforming commercial uses are proposed to be recognized by the Area Plan.

The Junior High School on Mission Boulevard as well as an elementary school in the hills are eliminated since the Fremont Unified School District does not foresee a need for these facilities in the future.

The Neighborhood Park in the hills is proposed to be deleted based upon the low number of residential units planned for the hills.

- (c) **Circulation:** The present Area Plan indicates a thoroughfare system in the hill area. The low residential densities and the topography do not warrant thoroughfare capacities. Collector streets are proposed instead. In addition, minor streets shown on the existing plan have been eliminated since their location is best determined with respect to specific development proposals.

The collector street connection with Mission Boulevard has been realigned to a location across from King Avenue.

AREA 6 – NILES HILL AREA EAST (bounded by Mission Boulevard, Niles Canyon Road, the City boundary, and Morrison Canyon Road)

Issues

- (a) **Land Use:**
 - Park and golf course on the Vargas Plateau.
 - Recognition of "as built" conditions.
- (b) **Circulation:**
 - Hill area streets.

Considerations

- (a) **1974 Open Space Amendment:** (See Introduction.)
- (b) The "as built" density designation in the "Niles Crest" subdivision, the areas along Mission Boulevard where existing development consists of a motel-apartment complex and rest home, and the zoning already established in the area of Pickering Avenue are each proposed for recognition.

In the upper hill area, instead of specifically indicating a location for the possible future City-wide golf course, a more general "floating" indication was given for this facility in the same general area as on the present plan. The City-wide Morrison Canyon Park was deleted because steep topography prohibits access off Morrison Canyon Road. An Open Space and trail designation are considered more appropriate.

- (c) Minor streets are proposed to be deleted from the General Plan, as are the collector streets giving access to the brick plant and bridge crossing over Niles Canyon.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Having considered the above issues and having examined relevant information including the opinions of Niles residents obtained in two public hearings, the Niles Area Plan Study Committee makes the following recommendations:

1. The Niles Area Plan should be amended in conformance with Exhibit "A" (Proposed Niles Area Plan).
2. The Objectives and Principles for Niles contained within the General Plan Policy Text should be amended to reflect the statement below.

Exhibit "B"

(a) Objectives

- (1) To maintain and enhance the physical characteristics which provide the historical continuity and individuality that give Niles a small town character and distinguish it from other areas of the City.
- (2) To maintain a housing balance in the overall Niles community between newer and older, larger and smaller, and more and less expensive units.
- (3) To focus community commercial activity on both sides of Niles Boulevard and to provide improvements which will enhance the identification of this area as the center of the district.
- (4) To preserve the architectural features characteristic of "Old Niles," and to ensure that new construction contributes to this character.
- (5) To provide a rich and varied park and recreation system through regional, community, neighborhood, and historic parks and trails which will assure the Niles community of long-term desirability as a living and working environment.
- (6) To permit large lot residential and other low intensity development in the hill areas to the degree that such development is consistent with the natural capacities of the land.
- (7) To provide a City trail system which links the Niles hills, the commercial center, historic sites, and park areas via the regional trail system to Niles Canyon and Coyote Hills.
- (8) To plan a circulation system which is adequate to handle anticipated traffic volumes but which does not encourage unnecessary through traffic.

(b) Principles

- (1) The following features which make Niles unique should be preserved and enhanced:
 - a) variety of lot and building size.
 - b) individuality of structures and architectural detail.
 - c) movie and railroad heritage.
 - d) quiet tree-canopied streets.
 - e) relative isolation and self-containment.

PROPOSED NILES AREA PLAN

LEGEND

RESIDENTIAL	
VERY LOW	25-10, 5-15, 10-23
LOW	20-35, 30-50, 45-65
MEDIUM	65-100, 110-135, 120-150, 150-180
HIGH	180-210, 200-230, 230-270
VERY HIGH	270-350, 350-500, 500-700
COMBINED RESIDENTIAL AND COMMERCIAL	
ACTIVITY CORRIDOR	
OFFICE COMMERCIAL	OPEN SPACE
RETAIL COMMERCIAL	PROJECT DESIGN OPEN SPACE
THOROUGHFARE COMMERCIAL	INSTITUTIONAL OPEN SPACE
AGRICULTURAL	
CHURCH	PROPOSED COMMUNITY PARK ¹
CEMETERY	EXISTING HISTORICAL PARK OR PLAZA
EXISTING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL	PROPOSED HISTORICAL PARK OR PLAZA
PROPOSED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ¹	REGIONAL OR CITY-WIDE PARK
EXISTING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL	FOOT TRAIL
PROPOSED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL ¹	BIKE TRAIL
EXISTING HIGH SCHOOL	HORSE TRAIL
PROPOSED HIGH SCHOOL ¹	FREEWAY
UTILITY CORRIDOR	THOROUGHFARE
PLANNING AREA BOUNDARY	THOROUGHFARE FOR STUDY
(H) HISTORICAL RESOURCE ²	COLLECTOR STREET
▲ EXISTING NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	RAILROAD
△ PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	• BART / STATION
▲ EXISTING COMMUNITY PARK	PEDESTRIAN MALL
★ GATEWAY	



0' 500' 1000'

NOTES
1 SIZE AND LOCATION ARE APPROXIMATE
2 FOR IDENTIFICATION REFER TO THE PRIMARY HISTORICAL RESOURCE MAPS

THIS MAP AND THE ACCOMPANYING TEXTUAL MATERIALS ARE FOR INFORMATIONAL PURPOSES AND SHOULD BE USED FOR GENERAL PLANNING PURPOSES. SPECIFIC PLANS AND ZONING CODES MUST BE USED TO SUPPLEMENT THIS INFORMATION FOR PLAN IMPLEMENTATION.

* THE RESIDENTIAL 6.5-10 DESIGNATION ALONG SECOND AND THIRD STREETS IS INTENDED TO REFLECT THE PATTERN OF EXISTING SMALL LOT SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCES.



- (2) Sensitive preservation, rehabilitation, restoration, and redevelopment should occur utilizing private (e.g., Local Improvement Districts, individual landowner efforts) and public (e.g., Community Development Block Grant) funds to enhance the area's positive features and to eliminate clear deficiencies.
- (3) Preservation of the existing housing stock should be sought to the extent feasible and consistent with the necessity of providing safe and habitable structures.
- (4) Relocation of quality older homes from sites elsewhere in the City to passed-over parcels in Niles should be encouraged.
- (5) The Residential 6.5-10 designation along Second and Third Streets and their cross streets is intended to reflect the pattern of existing small lot single family residences.
- (6) A zoning district compatible with small lot single family residences should be adopted so that the majority of residential uses in old Niles are provided a conforming zoning status.
- (7) Proposals for development, expansion, or replacement of housing on selected existing substandard lots should be considered based upon their individual merit and their own special circumstances in relation to neighboring uses.
- (8) Commercial development of the Southern Pacific lands northerly of Niles Boulevard should be encouraged in order to increase the ability of the Niles center to serve the shopping needs of Niles residents.
- (9) Additional off-street parking on or near Niles Boulevard should be provided for existing and future commercial uses.
- (10) Overhead utility lines along Niles Boulevard should be undergrounded in order to enhance the visual attractiveness of the commercial center.
- (11) Distinctive street lighting and other fixtures should be utilized in the commercial district.
- (12) The commercial designation east of Mission Boulevard and Mayhews Road is intended to reflect the existing commercial uses in this location.
- (13) Commercial uses at the intersection of Niles Boulevard and Mission Boulevard should primarily serve the commercial needs of the motoring public and the larger Fremont community rather than the needs of Niles residents for convenience goods which are more appropriately served by the old Niles Community center.
- (14) Grading for street, residential, and other construction should be minimized in order to protect the visual and environmental resources of the hill areas.
- (15) The intensity of development to be permitted in the hill areas should not necessitate streets in excess of two lanes.
- (16) The existing alleys in the old Niles District should be improved through joint private and/or public efforts so that the area's appearance and function are enhanced and so that future maintenance can be assured.
- (17) Niles Boulevard, between Rancho Arroyo Parkway and Sullivan Underpass, should remain as a collector street.

- (18) Preservation of historic resources should be encouraged through all available public and private means.
- (19) City and East Bay Regional Park cooperative development of the Quarry Regional Recreation Area and Niles Community Park should be encouraged both in the planning and development phases.
- (20) Adequate parking should be provided for the Quarry Regional Recreation Area and the Niles Community Park to assure that these recreation areas do not impact nearby residential areas.
- (21) Master Plans should be developed for the California Nursery and Vallejo Mill Historic Parks.

- (c) The Development Policy for the Niles area (Resolution No. 1345) regarding multi-family development in Niles "Proper" should be rescinded.
- (d) A zoning text amendment should be initiated which would accomplish the above Objectives and Principles and the preservation of the existing pattern of small lot single family residences on Second and Third Streets and their cross streets. This may be achieved through an R-1-4 or similar zoning district.
- (e) Continued City Council support for the established Community Development Block and Revenue Sharing Grant Program for the Niles Area should be demonstrated through execution of the following programs:
 - (1) Housing Rehabilitation Loans
 - (2) Provision of off-street parking
 - (3) Utility undergrounding and street lighting
 - (4) Community Park improvements
 - (5) Redevelopment study.
- (f) Future Community Development Block Grant type funds should be directed toward the following items not necessarily in order of priority:
 - Improvement of alleys.
 - Additional street tree planting.
 - Provision of curbs, gutters, storm sewers, and sidewalks.
 - Additional community, neighborhood, and historic park improvements.
 - Rehabilitation loans for commercial structures and rental housing.
 - Accelerate Rancho Arroyo extension and grade separation to Mission Boulevard.
 - Improvement of Old Canyon Road-Niles Canyon Road approach.

POST SCRIPT

Every plan is based upon a set of assumptions about future events. If these events unfold as anticipated, then the assumptions of the plan are borne out and the plan may be achieved. If the assumptions do not prove true, then the purposes of the plan may not be accomplished easily or even at all. An awareness of the conditions which are necessary for the success of a plan is what makes a plan realistic document.

The following conditions are believed by the Niles Area Plan Study Committee to be crucial to the long-term achievement of the plan which has been proposed above. Since Niles is today in many ways at a turning point, these observations take on particular importance.

- (1) Niles has one of the smallest population bases of any district in Fremont. The proposed plan only provides for additional population on lands along Mission Boulevard and to a limited degree in the hills. It has been assumed that the future population of Niles will be large enough to support the proposed commercial areas and to generate a business income which is adequate to allow for reinvestment in the older structures as well as development of new buildings. It is also assumed that the future population will be sufficient to support the continued operation of the elementary schools existing in the area and to provide users to justify improving the area's several undeveloped or underdeveloped parks. It is the belief of the Niles Area Plan Study Committee that the population base will be sufficient for these purposes. If the passage of time indicates otherwise, then consideration should be given to redevelopment to somewhat higher densities in selected locations where any adverse impacts (social and physical) would be minimized.
- (2) Niles has one of the highest median age figures of any area in the City. Over time, the continued aging of Niles residents will result in population turnover. It is critical that Niles remain sufficiently attractive that home buyers and families are drawn to Niles. It is crucial that the level of concern and attachment to Niles that is shown by present residents, many of whom go back for generations in Niles, be maintained in future residents. This can only be achieved by keeping Niles attractive through public and private improvements such as utility undergrounding, park development, housing conservation, street landscaping, improvement of the alleys, dressing up older structures, providing convenient commercial areas, etc. At the present time, approximately half of the homes in some older sections of Niles are owner occupied.
- (3) Niles contains many of the City's oldest buildings – both residential and commercial. The passage of time will add wear and tear to these structures. Some will become substandard and dilapidated unless minimal fire and building codes are enforced. Areas which now provide "low cost" housing and are an asset to the community could slip into the category of "cheap" housing exhibiting the physical, social, and economic traits of a slum. The success of the proposed Niles Area Plan rests on the assumption that codes will be enforced and that property owners will be willing and able to make necessary improvements either with private funds or with some form of public subsidy.
- (4) The railroad property on the north side of Niles Boulevard is viewed as critical to maintaining a viable downtown commercial area.

The stimulus of new investment in this area will evoke a response of similar investment in other structures in the downtown area. New commercial uses designed to be compatible with the existing old architecture could anchor the downtown and draw Niles residents back into Niles who are now going elsewhere to shop. A failure of the railroad lands to develop

commercially, because of other needs by the owners for the property, an inability to find a developer or tenants, limited access to customers or any other reason, would be a major setback to achievement of the proposed area plan. The willingness of the City to assist the land owner and/or developer to successfully achieve development of the lands should be expressed and open lines of communications maintained.

- (5) Niles is relatively isolated from the larger population areas of Fremont and neighboring cities. This is one of Niles' strongest assets. Isolation also, however, could become a liability to attracting new businesses and residents as well as serving those presently in Niles. If it becomes apparent in the future that traffic has become congested on Niles Boulevard or if commercial development is hampered by the present circulation system, then it could be necessary to implement a program of street widening and underpass improvement. This necessity might be avoided if a Route 238 Freeway were developed to relieve possible congestion on local streets in Niles as well as elsewhere in the City.

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